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DEATHS KNELL,

OR

The ſicke Mans Paſſing-Bell:

Summoning all ſicke Conſciences to prepare themſelues for the coming *of the great Day of Doome, leſt* mercies Gate be ſhut againſt them.

Fit for all thoſe that deſire to arriue at *the heauenly Ieruſalem.*

Whereunto are added Prayers fit for Houſholders.

Writen by W[redacted]

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Minim Deaths Knell.

LEt the memory of Death (good Christian) be euer the Looking-glasse of thy life, thy continuall Companion, and inseparable spouse: let thy solace be the sighes of a sorrowfull soule, and those the more bitter, the better: whilest Worme-like thou crawlest here below, fasten all thy faculties vpon the Commandements of thy Creator, for those in thy finall passage, must be the Pylot to steere thee into the Hauen of Heauen, thinke euery moment thou art in the waning, that the date of thy Pilgrimage is well-nigh expired, and that the lampe of thy life lieth twinckling vpon the snuffe, and that now it stands thee vpon to looke toward thy Celestiall home: thy forces are enfeebled, thy senses impaired, and on euery side, the tottering and ruinous Cottage of thy faint flesh threatneth a fall.

And meeting so many Herbengers of death, how câst thou but prepare for so gastly a guest? The young man may dye quickly, but the old cannot liue long; the young mans life by casualty

ſualty may be cut off, but the aged by Phyſicke cannot be preſerued: Greene yéeres muſt reſolue to grow to the graue, and the meditations of old age muſt dwell in the ſame: be mindfull of things paſt, carefull of things preſent, and prouident for things to come. Vſe the bleſſings of nature to the benefit of thy ſoule, be wiſe in well-doing and watchfull for thy end: Serue not the world; for that can poſſeſſe thée of nothing but pride, enuy, luſt, anger, malice, and infinit follies: for it defileth a man with ſinne, diſquieteth with troubles, oppreſſeth with labours, vexeth with temptations, vanquiſheth with vaine delights, and miſerably wrappeth him vp in wofull calamities. The world it is an Ambaſſadour of the euill, a ſcourge of the good, a tyrant of the truth, a breaker of peace, a worker of warre, a ſweet of vices, a gall of vertues, a fr[illegible] of lyes, an inuenter of nouelties, a trauell to the ignorant, a table of Gluttons, a furnace of concupiſcence, a ſepulcher of the dead, a priſon of the liuing, a pitfall to the rich, a burthen to the poore, a Palace of Pilgrims, a Den of Deceiuers, a ſlanderer of the good, a commender of the wicked, & a deluder of all. Thou haſt no reaſon to dote vpon the world, for at firſt it affords thée but a wrangling welcome, and at laſt turnes thée off, with

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a fearefull farewell: moreouer it doth torment thée, abuse thée, consume thée, and at length expell thée: whereas on the contrary: Heauen doth comfort thée, conserue thée, and exalt thée. On Earth thou sowest but in a field of Flint, which bringeth forth nothing but a Crop of care, and languishing for thy labour: it is time therefore to leaue so vnthriuing a husbandry, and to sowe in Gods ground the séed of repentant sorrow, and water it with the teares of humble contrition: so shalt thou reape a plentifull harueſt, and gather the fruits of euerlasting consolation. Imagine thou thy Spring to be spent, thy Summer ouer past, and that thou art arriued at the Fall of the Leafe, and though thy louing Lord doe long forbeare offenders, yet at last he will scourge them: and that his patience lends vs but respit to repent, not leasure to sinne. He that is tossed with sturdie stormes, and cannot come to his desired Port, rids little way, but is much turmoiled: so hée that passeth many yéeres, and purchaseth but small profit to his soule, hath had a long being, but a short life, for life is to be measured by vertuous actions, not by number of dayes. Some men by many dayes purchase many deaths, and others in short space attaine to life euerlasting. What is the body without

the soule, but a corrupted Carkeise: and what is the soule without God, but a Sepulcher of sinne? Man was made, and sent hither, to no other purpose but onely to serue God in this life, and to enioy Heauen in that life hereafter. If our end be the Kingdome of Heauen, why are we so much enamoured on the Earth? If the end of our Creation, be eternall saluation, why hunt we after the vanities of this vaine life? If our inheritance bee to raigne as Kings, why liue we like seruile slaues, in danger to be diuided from God, from Christ our Sauiour, from the Angels, from the Communion of Saints, and from the hope of our celestially portiō? If God be the way, the truth and the life, then he that walketh without him wandreth: that is not instructed by him, erreth: and that liueth without him, dyeth: to reuolt from him, is falling: to returne to him, is rising: to stay vpon him, is sure standing: Hee it is from whom to depart, is to dye: to whom to repaire, is to reuiue: in whom to trust, is truly to liue. O be not thou like those, that beginne not to liue vntill they be ready to dye, and then (when they deserue an enemies reward) come to craue of God a friends entertainement. Some thinke to snatch Heauen in a moment, which the best can scarce attaine in

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many yeares: and when they haue glutted themselues with worldly delights, would iumpe from the Pyet of Dives, to the ioyes of Lazarus: from the seruice of Satan, to the solace of a Saint. But be sure, that God is not so penurious, to make his Kingdome saleable for the refuse and reuersion of their liues, who haue sacrificed the principall and prime thereof to his enemies, and their owne brutish appetites: then onely ceasing to sinne, when the ability of offending is taken from them. What thanke is it to pardon our enemies, when wee cannot hurt them: to giue away our goods when we can keepe them no longer: to shake hands with our pleasures, when wee can vse them no more: to forsake sinne, when sinne leaueth vs: God may be mercifull at the last gaspe: but most miserable is that man, who casteth the Anchor of his eternall weale or woe, on so vncertaine and sandy a point. The thiefe may be saued on the Crosse, and mercy found at the last: yet it is not likely, that hee should finde fauour at his death, whose life earned the wages of wrath, or that his penitence should be accepted, who more for feare of hell, and his owne selfe alone, then for the loue of God, or lothsomelesse of sinne, cryeth for mercy.

Put not off repentance therefore to the last

point: take Dauids early in the morning: stay not till to morrow, though thou sufferedst the Bud to be blasted, the Flowres to fade, the Fruits to perish, the Leaues to wither, the Boughes to dry vp, and the body of the Tree to decay, yet still keep life in the Root, for feare left the whole become fuell for Hell fire: for where the tree falleth there it lyeth. Imagine that Time hath filed off the better part of thy naturall forces, and left thée in the Lées of thy dying dayes: and that thou art on board in thy voyage, and not farre from the period of thy last harbour: bée not therefore disfurnished of necessaries required in so perillous a iourney. O how men doe carefully beginne, industriously prosecute, and effectually end their labours, in attaining to this transitory trash vpon earth? but of that great affaire of winning Heauen, or falling into hell, there is had no respect: Nay, they doe not so much as remember, that there is a Hell for sinners, a Heauen for good liuers, a dreadfull day of Iudgement, or a strict reckoning to be made. Death in its owne property is sufficiently fearefull, but far more terrible, in respect of the Iudgement whereto it summoneth.

If thou wert now laid on thy departing Pillow, wearied with waiting, pinched with

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paine, drowned in dolour, oppressed with the heauy load of thy fore past committed sinnes, wounded with the sting of a guilty crying conscience: if thou feltest the force of death cracking thy heart-strings asunder, ready to make the sad diuorce of thy soule and body, if thou layest panting for shortnesse of breath, sweating a fatall sweat, and tyred with struggling against deadly pangs; O, how much then wouldst thou giue for a dayes contrition, an houres repentance, for a minutes amendment of life: Then worlds would be worthlesse in comparison of a little time, which now by whole months and yeeres thou lauishly mis-spendest. How deeply would it wound thy soule, when looking backe into thy life, thou shouldst espy many faults cõmitted, but none amended, many good workes omitted, but none recouered, thy duty to God promised but not performed! How disconsolable would thy case be, thy friends being fled, thy senses affrighted, thy mind amazed, thy memory decayed, thy thoughts agast, and euery part disabled in its proper faculty, sauing onely thy guilty conscience crying out against thee: What wouldest thou doe when stripped and turned out of thy house of Clay, into the World of Wormes, the Den of dust, and Cabine of corruption, from thence to be commented

ted before a most seuere Iudge, carrying in thy owne bosome, thy Inditement ready written, and a perfect Register of all thy mis-dœdes, when thou shouldest behold the glorious Maiestie of Iesus Christ, (clothed in white linnen, through which, his body shining like precious stones, his eyes like burning Lampes, his face like lightning, his Armes and Legs like flaming Brasse, and his Voice as the shout of a multitude) prepared to passe the sentence vpon thee; when thou shouldst see the great Iudge offended aboue thee, hell open beneath thee; the Furnace flaming, the Deuils waiting, the World burning, thy conscience accusing, and thy selfe standing as a forlorne wretch, to receiue thy fearefull and irreuocable sentence of condemnation?

Oh, bethinke thy selfe, how these visions would affright thee: to behold the gnashing of teeth, the horrour of the place, the rigour of the paine, the vglinesse of the company, and the eternity of these punishments: where the fire is vnquenchable; the the torment insupportable, hopelesse, helplesse, easelesse, and endlesse. For our fire may be endured, that intolerable, ours for comfort, that, for torment, ours, if not fed, extinguisheth, that, without feeding, neuer goeth out, ours giueth light,

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that, none ; ours consumes the matter, and ends the paine; that torments, but neuer wasteth, to make the paine perpetuall. In Hell, the lazie Lyterer must be pricked with flaming sorkes: the Glutton fed with hunger and thirst: the Drunkard quaffe bowles of burning Brimstone: the Couetous pine in penurie, the lustfull embrace vgly Snakes; and the proud apparelled with shame and confusion: and further, to aggrauate their griefe, and vp heape the measure of their vnmeasurable miserie, they shall turne vp their affrighted eyes, and behold the meeke triumphing, the Godly reioycing: then shall they perceiue, base apparell to bee glorious; gawdy attire infamous; the humble Cottage commended; the guilded Palace despised: simple obedience shew fairer then subtile policie; a cleere conscience better accepted, then profound and abstruce Philosophie: zealous prayers farre worthier then fine tales: good workes preferred before sweet words. Is not he more then mad that will play away his time allotted to preuent those intolerable calamities: Is it not a senselesse security, to hug in thy bosome so many serpents as sinnes: or to foster in thy soule so many malicious accusers, as mortall faults: wouldst thou not then thinke one life too little,

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to repent for so many iniquities, the least whereof is strong enough to hurle thee irrecouerably into these vnspeakeable torments? Betimes then deuote the residue of thy dayes, to make an atonement with Iehouah, the generall Iudge, and so endeuour to set free thy soule from such confusion, as by sinne thou art sure to fall into. What canst thou purchase by being so long a customer to the World, but false ware, suitable to such a Merchants Shop where trafficke is toyle, wealth, woe, gaine, losse: what interest canst thou recouer, that can equall thy detriments in grace and goodnesse: or what canst thou find in this vale of vanities, that is comparable to the fauour of God? Let not thy youthfull affections ouersway thee, for time will tell thee, they are but bubbling follies. Let not temporall feares mislead thee, for the force of reason will rather draw thee to feare God then men, and to stand more in awe of perpetuall then temporall punishments. Who would fasten his eternall affaires vpon the slipperinesse of vncertaine life: or who (but one of distempered wits) would offer to put tricks vpon him, who is the strict searcher out of the closest secrets: with whom he may dissemble to his cost, but to deceiue him, tis impossible: Wilt thou account

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it a craft to steale time from God, & to bestow it on his enemies, who kéepes tale to the least minute of thy life, and at thy ending will call thée to question, how thou hast imployed euery moment: Is it not preposterous policie to fight against God, till our weapons be blunted, our forces enfœbled, our strength made impotent, our best spent, and at last when we are falne into fainting, and fought our selues well nigh dead, then to presume of his mercy, whom we haue too much offended, so long opposed: Would it not be held an exorbitant course, that while the Ship is sound, the Pylot well, the Saylors strong, the Gale fauourable, and the Seas calme, to lie carelesly idle at rode losing so seasonable, weather, and then when the Ship leakes the Pilot sicke, the Mariners fœble, the winds aloft, the stormes boysterous, and the waues outragious, to launch forth, hoist sayle, and set out for a farre Iourney: Such are our euening-repenters, who in the soundnesse of health, and perfect vse of reason, cannot abide to cut Cables, and weigh those Anchors that with-hold them from GOD: but when their Senses are benummed, their Reason distracted, their Vnderstanding dulled, and both soule and Body tormented with pangs of paines, and sorrowfull sicknesse,

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then will cast backe their memory on those waighty affaires: then will they néeds become sudden Saints, that are scarce reasonable creatures.

How can a man, disanimated with inward Garboyles of vnsettled conscience, maimed in all his faculties, and surrounded with such strange distempers, be fit to dispose of his choisest Iewell, his soule, in to short a spurt? They that will loyter in Séed time, and beginne to sow, when others reape: They that will haue their Weapons to prouide, when their fellow Souldiers goe forth to fight: They that will lanish in health, and cast their accounts when they cannot speake: they that will slæpe out the day, and stumblingly trauell in the night: O let them thanke their owne folly, if they dye in debt, and finally fall headlong into the pit of perdition. Let the griefe of the sore be then the measure of thy sorrow: let a wide wound haue a careful cure: let thy contrition be agréeable to thy crime, and thy repentance equall to the transgressions. Thou must spend the day in mourning, the night in watching and wæping, and thy whole time in praying, and practice of repentance. Not euery short sigh will be a sufficient satisfaction: nor euery little knocke, a warrant to get in: for

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many cry, Lord, Lord, yet are not admitted. The foolish virgins knocked, yet stood without: Iudas conceiued a sorrow for sin, yet dyed desperately. Linger not thy conuersion, nor put off thy repentance from day to day, least the Almighty come vnto thée in a minute, and in his wrath suddenly destroy thée: neither sojourne thou long in sinfull securitie, nor shift off thy repentance till feare inforce thée to it: for then it will be bootlesse for thée to striue to stand, when thou art already falne. Frame out thy beginning as thou meanest to end, and endeuour to liue as thou desirest to dye. Wilt thou sacrifice the Fatlings to the fiend of darknes, and offer the carion Karkeises to the Father of Light; Wilt thou present the maine Crop to the Diuell, and leaue God the Gleanings? Wilt thou cramme the Deuill, with thy fairest fruits, and turne God to fade vpon thy wind-fals and after-gatherings? If Hell was prepared for the Deuill, and Heauen purchased for man, why should not hée then prouide for himselfe, but wilfully lose his inheritance by persisting in sinne? While we draw healthfull breath, hope strongly perswades vs, that by teares ouer-flowing from the Sea of a sorrowfull soule, wée may wash away our sinnes pollution, how foule soeuer: but being

once at deaths doore, notwithstãding our teeth gnash, our tongues cry out, our throats become hoarse with howling, our eyes gush Riuers of teares, and our hearts send out sighes as loud as Thunder, yet will it not anaile vs, for then none shall heare vs, none assist vs, no, nor so much as comfort vs: Then, O then, shalt thou finde, though (alas too late, that thou hast lost thy labour, hast trifled away thy time, and let slip the opportunity of thine own gaine. Thou shalt then perceiue thine errour irrecouerable, thy punishment insupportable, thy penitence vnprofitable, thy griefe, sorrow, and calamitie irrecourable: Let thy soule then enioy her lawfull Soueraignty, and thy body follow the footing of her directions: let not thy seruile senses, and lawlesse appetites ouercome her, and make her a Vassall in her owne Dominions. Dost thou desire to haue all good necessaries, as good house, good furniture, good fare, good appatell? and yet wilt thou suffer thy poore soule, thy principall charge, and aboue all these worthy the best respect, to lye cankering and rusting in all kind of euils? O vnspeakable blindnesse, that thou wilt be nice in wearing a bad shoo, yet carest not to cary an vgly & betattered soule! Alas, doe not thou set so light by that Iewell, which

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thy Maker sets at so high a price, nor rate thou thy soule at so base a pennyworth, being of so peerelesse worth. If the soule be so inestimable, that neither gold, nor treasure, nor any thing of lesse price, then the precious blood of the immaculate Lambe Christ Jesus, was able to buy it: if not all the Delicacies that Heauen and earth could afford, but onely the glorious Body of our Sauiour, were deemed a fit repast to feed it: If not all the Creatures of this, or millions of new worlds, if they were, but only the vnlimitable goodnesse and maiesty of God, can satisfie the desire, or fill the compasse and capacitie of it (for who is so vnsensible, that finders not the insacietie of his soule?) Who then, but one of peruerse will, incredulous minde, or pitti'esse spirit, would set more by the world then his soules worthinesse: or suffer so peere'esse a Paragon so many houres, dayes, monthes and yeeres, to lye enchannelled in the fil hy mire of sinne? Thou wilt trudge to a Physitian for thy sicke Seruant and looke out for a Leach to cure thy diseased House, and be very busie to patch vp thy worne garments, and yet wilt suffer thy soule to langaish for want of looking to, and dye for want of cure: and seeing it mangled with millions of vices, neuer seekest to bind it vp, and

restore it to its primitiue integritie. Is thy Seruant more neere, thy House more dear, and thy Coate to be more cared for then thine owne soule? How long, O how long wilt thou hunt after vanities, and rush violently and wilfully into thine owne ruine? Dare'st not thou suffer a Spider or a Toad to come neere thee: & wilt thou nestle in thy bosome so many Vipers as Vices, so many Serpents & Sinnes? and permit thy silly soule to be gnawed vpon with the poisonous talkes of Satan? Is thy soule so slight a substance, as to be held in so small esteeme? Did Christ come downe from Heauen, and become a wandring Pilgrime vpon Earth, exiling himselfe from the comfort of his Godhead, and wearing out thirty yeares in paine and penury for our soules? Did he suffer the Tragedy of his Passion to be bloodily acted, and patiently accepted? Did he make his Body as a Cloud, to dissolue into showres of vnblemished blood, and yeelded the dearest veine of his heart to bee cut asunder, that from thence might issue the precious price of our soules redemption? Why doe wee then sell our soules to the Deuill for euery delight and poore pittance of worldly pelfe? O that a Creature of so incomparable a worth, should be in the custody of so vnnaturall Jaylors, and

that, which in it selfe is so gracious and amiable, that the Angels and Saints delight to behold, should by sinne be made a horrour to heauen, and a fit play-fere for the soulesse Fiends! Let vs remember that our soule is not onely a part of vs, but also the Temple, the Paradise of almighty God, by him in Baptisme garnished, furnished, and endowed with most glorious Ornaments: How will he take it, to see his Temple prophaned, and turned into a Den of Deuils: His Paradise displanted, and made a wildernesse of Serpents: His Spouse defloured, and become an Adultresse to his Enemies? Durst wee commit such outrage against our earthly Princes? Would not the terrour of the Law, and popular shame curbe vs from it? and shall not the glorious Maiesty of Iehouah, and the vnrebated keennesse of his flaming double edged Sword, deterre vs from offering the like to his dearest Spouse? Will he that keepes Register of euery singuler haire, suffer himselfe to be wronged, and ouer-passe it vnpunished? Remember that it is a thing full of horrour, to fall into the hands of God, who is able to crush the proudest spirit, and to make his face his Foot-stoole: O wrastle not against the cares and cryes of thine owne Conscience, but so keepe and conserue it, as

that at the last it may gladly goe with thée, and be joyfully prepared before the Throne of God to answere for thée.

There was a man had three friends: two whereof hee loued entirely, the third hee made no great reckening of. This man being conuented before the King, vpon the accusation of some committed crime, solemnely came vnto his best friend, and intreated him to goe with him, but hee would not, yet went he with him some part of his way: Bethinking himselfe better he returned to his second friend, and desired him to go with him: but he made him that flat answer, that by reason of his more important affaires he could not go with him, yet gaue him a token of his remembrance. Being driuen to this hard exigent, hee trudged to his third friend of whom hee made sleight account, and he at the first word went with him to the King, and there stuck to him in al his dangers. So fares it with a man being sent for by death, he comes to his Wife, Children or Friends, and intreats them to go along with him: but they slip their necks out of the Collar, and will not, onely beare him company to the graue: then he perswades his goods and gold to goe along with him, but they cannot, and so turnes him off with a single

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simple cheeke-lapt about him: then, when all these shrinke backe and faile him, at the last point, his bosome-friend, his Conscience, will not forsake him. Labour then to get a good Conscience: for in the vtmost of extremities, That will neuer faile thee. There was a countrey, where the Commons vsed to elect their King, and againe to banish him at their pleasure, into a far Countrey, almost naked: But one (more prouident then the rest) so soone as he was chosen King, he dayly sent before-hand some prouision into that far Country: so that when the people banished him from them, hee was (hauing made a prouident preparation of wealth before) most royally there entertained. So must euery cautelous Christian prouide vpon Earth, as he may be ioyfully receiued into Heauen.

Pray-

Prayers for priuate Houſeholds at all times.

O Lord prepare our hearts to pray.

OMoſt mightie and eternall God, who art the Creator, Guider, Gouernour and preſeruer of all things, both in Heauen and Earth, vouchſafe we humbly beſeech thee, to looke downe with the eye of pitie and compaſſion vpon vs miſerable and wretched ſinners, who at this time are proſtrate here before thee, to offer vp this our Sacrifice of prayer & thankſgiuing vnto thee, & although we be vnworthy by reaſon of our manifold tranſgreſſions, to preſent our ſelues before thee: yet we humbly beſeech thee, for thy Sonne, Chriſt Ieſus, our bleſſed Lord and Sauiours ſake, to accept of vs, and to grant theſe our prayers and petitions which we doe make vnto thee.

O mercifull Lord, and louing father, remember the infirmities of thy fraile ſeruants, aſſiſting our weake ſoules with thy grace, that in all things we may loue, honour, and obey thy heauenly will and Maieſty, waking and walking in the paths of righteouſneſſe, to the ſcope of perfect Holineſſe, contemning

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this witching world, with all her fooliſh illuſions, for the true glorifying of thy Name, though Chriſt Ieſus our Lord, *Amen.*

Another Prayer.

O Mercifull Lord, and louing Father, that of the incomprehenſible riches of thy mercy toward the diſobedient and loſt Children of *Adam*, (who ſeruing Satan after the blinde and vnbridled luſts of the vile fleſh, were carryed away through ſinne and ignorance to damnation,) haſt reconciled vs to thy fauour, through grace and adoption in Chriſt Ieſus the righteous, by faith and holy conuerſation: in whom we are deliuered from eternall death and deſtruction: Haue mercy vpon vs, yea (Lord) haue mercy vpon vs, and for the loue of thy ſweet Sonne, our Redeemer, defend vs againſt the power of the Deſtroyer, and with thy mighty hand lift vs vp out of the puddle, and deathfull corruptions of this abominable world: purifying our hearts with thy grace, that wee being wholly inclined to thy heauenly deſires, may grow perfect in holineſſe, and abounding in the good works which thou haſt prepared for thy Saints to walke in, for the glorifying of Name: wee may grow

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an acceptable Temple for thy continuall dwelling in vs, O Lord; to the vnspeakeable peace and comfort, and to the euerlasting blisse and saluation of our soules, through Christ our Sauiour, *Amen.*

LOrd let not the darknesse of ignorance comprehend vs.

Leade vs by the continuall light of thy grace to worke righteousnesse.

Let vs not sleepe in sinne O God.

Quicken our weake soules against earthly sluggishnesse.

Giue vs the heauenly rest of thy vnspeakeable peace, O Lord.

And nourish vs with thy grace to saluation,

Lord comfort the needy, the sicke, the prisoned, the tormented, the distressed and helplesse with the presence of thy grace: and haue mercy vpon them and vs.

Pitifully heare our complaints, O deare Father, and grant our requests for thy sweet Sonnes sake our Sauiour.

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